



# 2021 HANDICAP SYSTEM RESOURCE GUIDE



Compliments of Washington Golf

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Dear WA Golf Handicap Chairpersons;

A new year is upon us and it will certainly be a busy one. Last year brought us new GHIN software and the launch of the World Handicap System before we faced a global pandemic that temporarily brought golf to a halt for most of our clubs. As we all adjusted to the new normal of leaving flagsticks in and not using bunker rakes, the changes that came with WHS and the GHIN software became engrained in golfers as well. While there were some bumps along the way, the switch to a global handicap system was successful thanks to the time and effort put forth by our dedicated Handicap Chairs and Club Professionals.

The job of a Handicap Chairperson can be a challenging one. We know you are the first line of defense when it comes to overseeing the Handicap System, but we also recognize you want to be out there having fun just like the rest of your members. To that end, we encourage everyone to seek out help and work closely with the other members of your Handicap Committee. You cannot hope to be successful in a vacuum, unaided by your Board, fellow members, and facility staff.

It is also crucial to have a meeting early on with your Handicap Committee to educate them on the basics of the Handicap System and the contents of your own Handicap Policy. We strongly encourage you to have your Head Professional serve on the committee, as you will need their buy-in and backing.

While you no doubt went through education on the World Handicap System last year, we want to continue to offer opportunities and resources so you can better understand the system. We have compiled many short videos and graphics outlining important principles of WHS topics on the WA Golf website and encourage you to use that as a resource. There will also be education opportunities by webinar this Spring.

The new GHIN platform will continue to see updates throughout the year. We've already seen the implementation of Digital Profile and Guardian Management to start the year and can expect to see a significant update to the template reporting system early in the golf season. Additionally, the GHIN Mobile App and GHIN.com will continue to be improved upon, with new features being added and a focus being placed on entering scores on a hole-by-hole basis. Be on the lookout for updates throughout the season.

We will continue to issue the Preferred Lies monthly newsletter. We want to engage with you as much as possible and hope this is a better way to get pertinent information out to you in a timely manner. This newsletter will be even more important to get this new information out to all of you. Please make sure your email is current with us, so you do not miss any news from our department.

Lastly, we want to say THANK YOU! Being the Handicap Chairperson at your club is not an easy position and we greatly appreciate your support. With your efforts, the World Handicap System is properly administered and creates a fair and equitable environment for all.

And of course, don't hesitate to call or email us anytime.

We greatly appreciate your continuing commitment to WA Golf and your own club.

Have a wonderful 2021 golf season,



Nate Schroeder  
Director of Handicapping  
& Course Rating



Collin Westwood  
Manager of Handicapping  
& GHIN Services



# ABOUT WASHINGTON GOLF

In 1922, Washington Golf (WA Golf) was formed in order to conduct the Men's State Amateur Golf Championship. Since its humble beginnings 99 years ago, WA Golf has evolved into one of the largest amateur golf associations in the United States providing a multitude of benefits and services to more than 70,000 individual members at over 530 member golf clubs throughout the state of Washington and Northern Idaho.

WA Golf is a 501(c)4 non-profit amateur golf association governed by volunteer, amateur golfers who employ a full-time, professional staff. WA Golf also serves as the only statewide representative of the United States Golf Association (USGA).

**Mission Statement:** Enriching the lives of people in Washington and Northern Idaho through the many social, recreational, and lifetime benefits of the game of golf.

## **WA Golf Core Values:**

**Integrity:** Conduct business with highest moral and ethical standards.

**Inclusiveness:** Provide opportunities for all people interested in the game of golf.

**Stewardship:** Celebrate and embrace golf's history and traditions.

**Excellence:** Strive for the best in all endeavors.

**Service:** Provide superior support for all clubs and individual members.

**Volunteerism:** Give back to communities through the game of golf.

**WA Golf Vision:** Washington Golf will be the leader and the primary resource in promoting and providing opportunities for anyone interested in the game of golf. Through the development of strong alliances and partnerships within and beyond the golf industry, we will exemplify and enhance what the overall enjoyment and growth of the game is all about. We will enthuse our members and partners by giving back to the game and by providing more inclusive and tangible benefits to enhance the membership experience. The WA Golf owned and operated facility will be a warm and welcoming place for all and serve as the foundation for the organization to establish programs that benefit the people and communities of the region.

## **Provides Handicap Indexes Through the GHIN System**

- Issues an official Handicap Index through the GHIN system (largest in the world)
- More than 70,000 members annually
- Daily Handicap revisions (every day following a posted score) resulting in the most up-to-date and accurate Handicap Indexes
- Receive Handicap Index Report via Member Newsletter e-mail
- Eligibility to compete in WA Golf Amateur Championships, as well as enjoyable competitions for golfers of every handicap
- WA Golf Winter Series Events
- WA Golf Net Four-Ball Match Play
- WA Golf Casual Golf Days are fun-filled, noncompetitive golf outings at a reduced fee, held at WA Golf Private and Resort Member Clubs
- WA Golf Player Point Systems from the Championships of Excellence resulting in annual rankings
- Members of participating clubs eligible to renew their club membership through the WA Golf website
- Members receive special offers from participating clubs via email

## **Conducts Championships of Excellence**

Conducts major amateur championships for all playing levels and gender – Men's Amateur Championship, Women's Amateur Championship, Men's Mid-Amateur Championship, Women's Mid-Amateur Championship, Senior Men's Amateur Championship, Senior Women's Amateur Championship, Super Senior Men's Amateur Championship, Super Senior Women's Amateur Championship, Men's Four-Ball, Senior Men's Four-Ball, Women's Four-Ball, Champion of Champions, Mixed Chapman and Parent-Child. WA Golf also conducts six Winter Series Tournaments in Winter and Spring.

## **Pacific Northwest Golf Association Membership**

All WA Golf members are automatically members of the Pacific Northwest Golf Association (PNGA). PNGA member benefits include championship eligibility into regional amateur championships, and receiving the *Pacific Northwest Golfer* magazine with the Golf Washington insert direct-mailed to your home four times a year.

## **The Home Course**

Located in historic DuPont, Washington you will find The Home Course of the Pacific Northwest Golf Association and Washington Golf. The golf course opened in 2007. A research of the history of the area tells us that a golf course may have been established next to the historic Fort Nisqually in the early 1800s. As a member of WA Golf you are entitled to play The Home Course at a reduced green fee. In the future, you will find many other golf entities housing their offices at the home of amateur golf in the Pacific Northwest, The Home Course.

## **Administers Course and Slope Rating System**

Up to 40 courses rated annually (30 additional with GPS measuring service).

## **Conducts USGA Qualifying's in the State of Washington**

Conducts USGA national championship qualifying for the following events:

- U.S. Open
- U.S. Women's Open
- U.S. Senior Open
- U.S. Senior Women's Open
- U.S. Amateur
- U.S. Women's Amateur
- U.S. Mid-Amateur
- U.S. Senior Amateur
- U.S. Senior Women's Amateur
- U.S. Women's Amateur Four-Ball
- U.S. Men's Amateur Four-Ball
- U.S. Junior Amateur
- U.S. Girl's Junior

## **Supports Evans Caddie Scholarship Program in the State of Washington**

Supports over 25 Evans Caddie Scholars with full tuition and housing scholarships at UW and WSU. Evans Cup fundraising tournaments and other programs have raised more than \$2.0 million since 1992.

## **Provides Financial Support for Washington Junior Golf Association**

Largest financial contributor to WJGA – supports statewide competitive programs for young golfers.

## **Supports Legislative Lobbyist in Olympia to keep WA Golf and its members and member golf clubs apprised of issues related to the golf industry**

## **Provides Financial Support for Turfgrass Research at Northwest Universities**

Annual financial contribution to Northwest Turfgrass Association which conducts turf research to enhance environmentally friendly methods of maintaining golf courses.

## **Provides Financial Support for the First Green of Washington**

Annual financial contributor to FGOW – supports high school curriculum designed to teach the “Links as Labs” philosophy. First Green is an innovative environmental education outreach program using golf courses as environmental learning labs. Golf course superintendents and/or local golf course representatives host students on field trips where they test water quality, collect soil samples, identify plants, design plantings, assist in stream bed restoration and are involved in the ecology and environmental aspects of the golf course. The students are also introduced to many other aspects of golf.

## **Administers Rules of Golf and Amateur Status Reinstatement Program**

## **Washington Golf Economic Impact Study**

In order to educate legislators about the importance of golf to the region’s economic health, WA Golf helped to revive the Golf Alliance of Washington and funded an Economic Impact Study, which found that the golf industry in overall revenue impact is the fourth highest in the state, and generates revenue comparable to the combined revenues of all the state’s other major spectator sports - football, baseball, soccer, etc.

In addition to the game’s recreational value, golf is a key industry which contributes to the vitality of Washington’s economy. In 2007, Washington’s golf industry generated a direct economic impact of \$1.2 billion.

Golf brings visitors to the state, drives new construction and residential development, generates retail sales, and creates demand for a myriad of goods and services. When the indirect and induced effects of golf-related activities are considered, Washington’s golf economy supported approximately \$2.5 billion of economic activity, including \$116 million in tax revenue, and over 29,000 jobs with \$796.3 million in wage income.

# IMPORTANT DATES & SCHEDULES

Championship Registration Begins

January 20, 2021

Visit [www.wagolf.org](http://www.wagolf.org) to view the WA Golf Championships Schedule and register online.

Club Roster Inactivation Deadline

January 31, 2021

All inactivation's must be completed and transmitted to GHIN no later than 11:59 pm (PST) on January 31, 2021. It is the policy of WA Golf to not issue credits for any incorrect member(s) on your Club's roster after the Inactivation Deadline.

First Day to Post Scores

March 1, 2021

All acceptable scores from rounds played within the boundaries of WA Golf from this date until November 14th must be posted as soon as practicable. If a member plays in an area that is/was still accepting scores during the non-score posting period (November 15th to the last day of February) those scores should also be posted as soon as practicable.

Last Day to Post Scores

November 14, 2021

Scores from rounds played before November 15, 2021 may be posted at any time, including during the inactive score posting season. Scores from rounds played within the boundaries of WA Golf during the non-score posting period of November 15th to the last day of February are never acceptable for handicap purposes.

# WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM PLAYER RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the World Handicap System (WHS), each golfer who maintains a Handicap Index must adhere to the responsibilities outlined in Rule 1.3(i) to preserve the integrity of the system. We ask that every WA Golf member join us in upholding these important responsibilities that support the integrity of golf. These expectations are from the Rules of Handicapping, effective January 2020.

- Act with integrity by following the Rules of Handicapping and to refrain from using, or circumventing, the Rules of Handicapping for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage.
- Attempt to make the best score possible at each hole.
- Submit acceptable scores for handicap purposes as soon as possible after the round is completed and before midnight local time.
- Submit acceptable scores to provide reasonable evidence of their demonstrated ability.
- Play by the Rules of Golf.
- Certify the scores of fellow players.

# TIPS ON ADDING, INACTIVATING, OR DELETING A MEMBER

## Check Your Inactive Roster Before Adding a New Member

Any member who has been a part of your club in the past will remain on your inactive roster within the Admin Portal. To view or search this list, simply select the Inactive option under the Membership Status drop down menu when you are on the Roster tab. Once selected, you can search for a golfer by name or scroll the list of your inactive golfers. You can also run the Roster Report under the Template Reporting section and choose In-active under the Golfer Status dropdown to get a full report of your inactive list. Checking for an inactive golfer before creating a new golfer will help avoid creating a second GHIN number for a golfer that will need to be merged later.

If you have a new member who has been on the GHIN system before but they do not remember their number, please contact WA Golf to inquire before simply adding them to your roster as new. We will be able to provide the player's GHIN number and this will allow you to transfer the existing GHIN record for your new member into your club with their old scoring record attached.

## How Do I Inactivate or Delete a Player?

Simple! When you are viewing your list of active golfers under the Roster tab, select the check box next to the golfer you wish to inactivate and then click the Inactivate button at the top of the list. All golfers that are inactivated will permanently remain on your inactive golfer list. You will not be able to permanently delete or remove a player's record.

## Save Time and Inactivate/Activate a Large Number of Members At One Time

You can save time and activate or inactivate multiple golfers, or your entire roster, at one time by simply selecting the check box next to every golfer whose status you wish to change before choosing an action to take. To quickly select your entire roster, select the check box next to Golfer Name at the top of your golfer list and choose the All Pages option. This will select all golfers, even those you can't see on the current page, and you can then choose the action to take from the options at the top of your roster. When viewing your roster, you can choose whether to see active or inactive golfers (or both) using the Membership Status drop down menu at the top of your roster.

# HANDICAP SYSTEM AUTHORIZATION PROGRAM FOR CLUBS

Any group wishing to be a WA Golf Member Club must contact WA Golf to begin the authorization process. If the group is within the WA Golf territory but does not want to be a WA Golf Member Club, they must contact the USGA Handicap Department directly to fill out the Directly Authorized Club (DAC) application. Once a non-WA Golf club completes the application at the USGA and is approved as a DAC, they will be monitored for handicap compliance by WA Golf.

As defined within the Rules of Handicapping, a “golf club” is an organization of at least 10 individual members that operates under bylaws with Committees (a Handicap Committee is required) to supervise golf activities, provide peer review, and maintain the integrity of the Rules of Handicapping (see Handicap Committee and Club Responsibilities Checklist of the USGA Handicap Committee Guide). A golf club must be affiliated with an Allied Golf Association (AGA) to use the World Handicap System. A golf club can obtain a license directly from the USGA or through its membership in an AGA that is already licensed by the USGA and that has jurisdiction in the geographic area that includes the principal location of the golf club.

Members of a golf club must have a reasonable and regular opportunity to play golf with each other. The members’ scores are to be posted on the day of play and be available for inspection by others, including, but not limited to, fellow members and the club’s Handicap Committee.

At least one member of the handicap committee is required to participate in an educational session as part of the authorization program. The education session includes the passing of a test to demonstrate knowledge of the Rules of Handicapping. A score of at least 80% is required to satisfy the educational requirement. The education session and test can be completed online.

All clubs will be required to complete a yearly certification assesment by WA Golf. If the members of the club’s handicap committee have not changed from the previous year, no action will be required by the club. If the member of the handicap committee who completed the educational session and test is no longer a part of the handicap committee another member will need to complete this requirement. If this member does change please inform the WA Golf Handicapping Department.

If you have any questions on the Certification & Authorization Program, please call the WA Golf Handicapping Department at 1-877-300-1344 or e-mail Collin Westwood at [cwestwood@wagolf.org](mailto:cwestwood@wagolf.org).

# HANDICAP COMMITTEE

An essential element of the World Handicap System is the Handicap Committee. Each golf club or Authorized Golf Association utilizing the World Handicap System must appoint a Handicap Committee to ensure the integrity of each Handicap Index it issues. This committee must make certain that the members comply with the World Handicap System.

## Handicap Committee and Club Responsibilities Checklist

### 1. Establish a Handicap Committee

It is recommended the Handicap Committee be comprised of at least three members with an odd number of members to aid when voting occurs. The Handicap Committee should be chaired by a member of the club. An employee of the club is encouraged to serve on the Handicap Committee or participate in an advisory role; however, it is preferable not to have the employee serve as the chair.

The Handicap Committee as a whole should meet before the start of the season to review the Rules of the World Handicap System and to establish procedures for handicapping. The procedures should include information outlining score posting and the responsibilities of the Handicap Committee for posting penalty scores or adjusting a Handicap Index. Including local rules on Preferred Lies and tournament issues is also a great idea. During the season, the Handicap Committee should meet as needed to review and audit scoring records and resolve compliance problems.

The accuracy of the World Handicap System is dependent on complete scoring records. The Handicap Committee is responsible for seeing that members turn in all acceptable scores for peer review. A club will not enjoy fair games without full score reporting from all members. The Handicap Committee is essentially vouching for each member's Handicap Index. So, it is essential that each member has a Handicap Index that represents their potential ability. It is both the Handicap Committee's and the member's responsibility (jointly) to adhere to the principles of the World Handicap System.

### 2. Ensure the Club Meets the Definition of a Golf Club

A Golf Club is an organization of at least ten active individual members that operates under bylaws with Committees to supervise golf activities, provide peer review, and maintain the integrity of the Rules of Handicapping.

Members of a Golf Club must have a reasonable and regular opportunity to play golf with each other. The members' scores are to be posted on the day of play and be available for inspection by others, including, but not limited to, fellow members and the club's Handicap Committee.

### 3. Know the Rules of Handicapping

At least one member of the Handicap Committee needs to have participated in an educational session including passing a test to demonstrate knowledge of the Rules of Handicapping.

#### 4. Educate and Communicate the Rules of Handicapping to Members

An effective Handicap Committee will continually provide the education and information the players need. This includes the members' responsibility to comply with the Rules of Handicapping and the potential consequences of not fulfilling those responsibilities.

The Handicap Committee should be accessible to answer member's questions and should contact the WA Golf Handicapping Department if they are unsure about how to proceed or answer questions. Education efforts should be concentrated on the key features of the Rules of Handicapping that are most relevant to players, so that they understand:

- which scores are acceptable
- the timeframe for submitting scores for handicapping purposes
- how to calculate a maximum hole score for handicap purposes
- how to convert the Handicap Index into a Course Handicap
- the concept of handicap allowances for different formats of play
- where to find the scoring record
- how their Handicap Index is calculated
- the Handicap Committee's ability to post penalty scores
- the process of a handicap review
- the consequences of a player not adhering to their responsibilities

This can be achieved through the Golf Club's website, newsletters or policies and procedures document. The Handicap Committee might also consider holding a member's information meeting, as part of the overall communication and awareness process. WA Golf can supply clubs with a range of materials to support this effort, including PowerPoint slides, videos, posters and/or pamphlets. Posted educational resources can be found on the WA Golf website, [www.wagolf.org](http://www.wagolf.org), under the "Keep Score" tab.

#### 5. Ensure Course Details are Accurate (Only Applies to Clubs Associated with a Golf Course)

The Handicap Committee should periodically review the published Course Rating, Slope Rating, par and stroke index values within the handicap software to confirm they match what is listed on the scorecards.

##### *Course Rating and Slope Rating*

For a score to be acceptable for handicap purposes, it must be played on a set of tees on a golf course with a valid Course Rating and Slope Rating. If one or more sets of tees on your course have not been rated, the Handicap Committee should contact the WA Golf Course Rating Department.

##### *Inactive Season*

The Handicap Committee must confirm the club is observing the inactive season as determined by WA Golf. Scores made at any golf course observing an inactive season are not acceptable for handicap purposes.

##### *Modifications to the Course*

The Handicap Committee must notify WA Golf when temporary tees and/or greens are used. WA Golf will decide whether scores made under those conditions are to be accepted for handicap purposes, and whether the Course Rating and Slope Rating should be modified temporarily.

If a temporary rating will not be issued, the Handicap Committee has a responsibility to notify its members and guests that when a hole is not played or temporary tees/greens are in use, the score for that hole must be Net Par. A minimum of 7 holes for a 9-hole score or 14 holes for an 18-hole score must be played in order for the score to be acceptable for handicap purposes.

If the number of holes not played or temporary tees/greens in use is greater than the minimum requirement and a temporary rating has not been issued by WA Golf, the score must not be used for handicap purposes for members and guests alike.

The Handicap Committee must notify WA Golf when permanent changes are made to the course or course set-up has changed significantly. WA Golf will then review the current Course Rating and Slope Rating and determine whether a re-rating is necessary.

### *Par*

The determination of hole par is a part of the course rating process done by WA Golf. It is important to note that the primary factor for determining whether a standardized par should be used is the design of the hole as it was intended to be played. Secondary factors include the most commonly played set of tees per gender and the most common par value on a hole. After consultation with the Golf Club and/or golf course staff, WA Golf will make the final determination.

The Golf Club must make certain the par assigned for each hole (and gender, if different) is correctly listed on any tee signs as well as printed on the club's scorecard, posted in a prominent place at the club, or available via online applications.

### *Playing from an Unrated Set of Tees*

When a set of tees do not have a Course Rating and Slope Rating for the appropriate gender, the Handicap Committee must contact WA Golf for approval to utilize the yardage adjustment table in Appendix G to determine a temporary rating that can be used by the player(s) to post acceptable score(s) for handicap purposes. If scores are posted frequently using the adjusted ratings, the Handicap Committee must contact the authorized association so that a permanent rating can be established.

### *Stroke Index Allocation*

Stroke index allocation is used to determine the maximum hole score to be posted for handicap purposes as well as knowing where the player is to give or receive handicap strokes.

Recommended stroke index allocations can be provided to the club by WA Golf using course rating data. The raw hole rankings are based on the combination of Course Rating and Bogey Rating relative to par, with the final recommendation adjusted to accommodate stroke play and match play. However, clubs can continue to determine stroke allocation with alternative methods.

The USGA recommends that each course has one allocation for men and one for women, based on the most commonly played set of tees for each gender.

## **6. Make the Process of Converting a Handicap Index to a Course Handicap as Easy as Possible**

The calculation of the Course Handicap is critical to determine the appropriate score to submit for handicap purposes, including any adjustments for Net Double Bogey or application of Net Par.

It is important that this conversion process is made as easy as possible for all players and options may include use of:

- the GHIN mobile app or other electronic tool
- a Course Handicap Table
- the Course Handicap Calculator located on the WA Golf website

Course Handicap tables should be posted in a place which is accessible for use by all players. To determine a 9-hole Course Handicap, halve the 18-hole Handicap index and round to the nearest tenth. Contact WA Golf if you need a new copy of your Course Handicap tables.

## **7. Facilitate the Timely Submission of Scores**

The Rules of Handicapping rely on the accurate and timely submission of all acceptable scores. Scores should be submitted immediately following play to ensure that they are included in the playing conditions calculation, are available for peer review and the player's Handicap Index can be updated for the next day.

The Handicap Committee should ensure the submission of scores under the Rules of Handicapping, for all authorized formats of play which includes both competition and recreational scores. It is important that the Course Rating and Slope Rating information is easily accessible for all players to allow them to properly record their scores.

It is the responsibility of the player to post their scores unless otherwise directed by a Committee in charge of a competition.

## **8. Maintain Accurate Player Scoring Records**

The Handicap Index will be updated by the USGA the day after a score was submitted. This will generally be an automated procedure, within the handicap computation service. However, where appropriate, the Handicap Committee may perform a special update to the scoring record which will recalculate the Handicap Index immediately.

Members should be made aware of where they can access their Handicap Index and score record information. Any errors or omissions in a player's scoring record reported to the Handicap Committee must be handled appropriately, according to the situation. If a golfer is no longer an active member of at least one Golf Club their Handicap Index will lapse.

The full version of a scoring record is accessible to the Handicap Committee and fellow members of the player's Golf Club. The scoring record will contain full details of the most recent 20 scores. The condensed version of a scoring record is available to all players and club administrators utilizing the Admin Portal. For privacy reasons, the condensed scoring record will omit reference to the day the round was played, and the golf course played.

## **9. Apply Applicable Penalty scores and Adjust the Handicap Index of any Member Whose Handicap Index Does Not Reflect Their Demonstrated Ability**

The Rules of Handicapping include safeguards to ensure a member's Handicap Index accurately reflects their demonstrated ability. However, in rare instances where the handicap calculation and safeguards do not accurately reflect their demonstrated ability, it will be necessary for the Handicap Committee to consider taking action.

When considering any adjustment to, or withdrawal of, a member's Handicap Index, the Handicap Committee must ensure that the player is:

- involved in the process.
- fully informed of the level of any adjustment or withdrawal, and
- made aware of how long it applies.

Rule 7 of the Rules of Handicapping provides details on the process for each of these steps. These procedures are designed to both assist the Handicap Committee and ensure that each player is treated fairly and consistently from Golf Club to Golf Club.

If it is determined an adjustment to the Handicap Index or Low Handicap Index is appropriate, as a courtesy, the Golf Club performing the adjustment is strongly encouraged to notify ALL other Golf Clubs where the member is an active member.

### *Penalty Score*

It is strongly encouraged for a member to post the score on the same day of play. The Handicap Committee is authorized to post a penalty score to a member's record when a member fails to post an acceptable score from an authorized format of play in a timely manner. No prior notification is required, however, as a part of the club's policies and procedures it is recommended to notify players of the consequences for failing to post acceptable scores.

The penalty score will be identified with the letter "P" for the score type and can be applied by the Handicap Committee through the USGA Admin Portal. The Handicap Committee should decide the appropriate penalty score based on the intent of the player and can select a high or low penalty score. This will duplicate the highest or lowest Score Differential respectively found in the player's most recent 20 scores. Alternatively, if the Handicap Committee is aware of the score information it may post the actual score with the score type of "P" in addition to the penalty score.

### *Adjusting a Handicap Index*

If a member's Handicap Index does not reflect their demonstrated ability the Handicap Committee should conduct a handicap review. Using all available evidence, including Admin Portal and reporting for analysis, the Handicap Committee may adjust or freeze the Handicap Index of the member. The Handicap Committee should continue to monitor the player's scoring record and further adjust the Handicap Index if needed. An adjustment to a member's Handicap Index must be, at minimum, a one stroke difference from their current Handicap Index. This adjustment must not last for longer than a one-year period.

A modified Handicap Index will be identified with the letter "M" (e.g., 16.3M).

### *Adjusting a Low Handicap Index*

The difference of greater than 3 strokes between a member's Handicap index and Low Handicap Index triggers a soft cap or hard cap. The Handicap Committee should review all members with a cap. If the cap is not appropriate consider resetting the Low Handicap Index to a new value. An adjustment to a player's Low Handicap Index must be, at minimum, a one stroke difference from their current Low Handicap Index. This adjustment must not last for longer than a one-year period. The Handicap Committee should continue to monitor the player's scoring record and further adjust the Low Handicap Index value if needed.

An adjusted Low Handicap Index will be identified with the letter "M" (e.g., 15.0M).

### *Withdrawing a Handicap index*

In the rare instance where a member repeatedly fails to adhere to their responsibilities under the Rules of Handicapping, the Handicap Committee may petition WA Golf to withdraw the Handicap Index from the member. All handicap withdraws must be formally submitted in writing to WA Golf for approval. When a Handicap Index has been withdrawn the member will be identified with a "WD" as the value for the Handicap Index within the Admin Portal and on reports.

The Handicap Committee should submit the expiration date of the withdrawn status and request WA Golf reinstate the Handicap Index for the member upon such date. Once reinstated, the Handicap Committee should continue to monitor the member's scoring record.

### *Player Appeal Process*

Prior to making an adjustment or withdrawal of a player's Handicap Index, the player must be given the opportunity to respond either in writing or in person to the Handicap Committee.

The player should be provided the information available as to why the Handicap Index is being adjusted or withdrawn as well as the duration.

The Handicap Committee should ensure that it has procedures in place to settle any disputes in relation to a handicap review or the application of the Rules of Handicapping in general. The player may escalate their grievance of the Handicap Index adjustment to WA Golf for review if they believe the club's Handicap Committee is not operating within the Rules of Handicapping.

## **10. Perform Annual Handicap Reviews**

It is strongly recommended that the Handicap Committee perform a handicap review annually of all members of its club. We recommend this review is conducted at the end of the score posting season. Handicap reviews can also be conducted for individual members at any time during the year. The Handicap Committee should pay particular attention to any scores on a member's scoring record that have been brought to the Handicap Committee's attention by other members or players. This can be aided through reporting tools available on the Admin Portal.

The purpose of the review is for the Handicap Committee to make certain the Handicap Index of the member is representative of their demonstrated ability. The Handicap Committee should look for anomalies with the scoring record. See Appendix D of the Rules of Handicapping for guidance.

# COMMON HANDICAP COMMITTEE Q&A

Q: May a Handicap Committee require returning of scorecards from players before allowing a score to be posted?

A: No. You can ask that a scorecard accompany a score, but you cannot take punitive action regarding the player's scoring record or Handicap Index if they do not turn in a card with the score. You can request, however, that from time-to-time that cards be turned in for review reasons. You cannot refuse a score that doesn't have an accompanying scorecard.

Q: What scores can/cannot be used for handicapping?

A: Please see Rule 2 in the Rules of Handicapping for an explanation of "Acceptable Scores."

Q: When should a golfer adjust their scores?

A: Please see Rule 3 in the Rules of Handicapping for an explanation of the three situations a player must adjust their hole scores for handicapping purposes (Unfinished Holes and Conceded Strokes, Holes Not Played or Not Played Under the Rules of Golf and Maximum Hole Score)

Q: If a Handicap Committee has modified a member's Handicap Index, how long should the modification remain in effect?

A: As long as the Handicap Committee determines is fair and necessary. Twice a month the Committee should compare the modified Handicap Index to the Handicap Index the player would have received had they not been subject to an adjustment.

Q: What is the effect of a competition score on a player's Handicap Index?

A: A competition score does not effect the player's Handicap Index any differently than a home or away score.

Q: What qualifies as a Competition Score?

A: The Committee in charge of a competition must announce or publish before play whether the competition will result in a "competition score" being posted. Daily, Weekley, or Monthly play days can be designated as Competition Scores.

Q: Should the Handicap Committee make recommendations to the Competition Committee about a Handicap Index in competition?

A: Yes. It should follow WHS guidelines in recommending that:

- A current, active Handicap Index be used in order to enter competitions.
- When a Handicap Index is required for entering a competition, the player must submit the Handicap Index in effect on the date required by the competition
- The Competition Committee should decide on the date of a Handicap Index to be used in the competition
- When a competition is played over multiple days the Competition Committee should make the decision to use the same handicap index for all rounds or have set dates to use for each round

# MODIFICATION OF HANDICAP INDEXES

## Rule 7: Committee Actions

Occasionally a Handicap Committee may be faced with a tough situation when a member is carrying a Handicap Index that does not accurately reflect their potential scoring ability. Perhaps fellow members have registered complaints, or the golfer repeatedly has unrealistic finishes at area competitions. What action is appropriate by the Committee?

First, call a meeting of the club's Handicap Committee, and include interested parties such as the club golf professional and club president. Bring written documentation regarding complaints received, the member's current score history, his/her competition scores, and your World Handicap System manual.

Carefully review all materials. Have a fair, open-minded, but honest discussion about this member's game, how they may affect other golfers, and their scoring history. Consider the following:

- Does this member observe the spirit of the Handicap System?
- Do they post all rounds played under the Rules of Golf during the active season or do they pick and choose which scores to post?
- Have you attached penalty scores to their record for failure to post and they still avoid posting?
- Do they post erroneous scores or stop play after 6 or 13 holes to avoid posting a 9 or 18-hole score, respectively?
- Do they repeatedly play more than one ball and say they are just practicing or deliberately take extra strokes to inflate a score?
- Do they refuse to adjust scores for Maximum Hole Score or for not finishing a hole or a round?
- Do they say they do not need to post because they do not play in competitions?
- Do they play a markedly different game with different players? Are you hearing reports of them shooting miraculous rounds at competitions, scores that seem beyond their ability as recorded in their scoring history?

At this time, especially, please remember that a member must earn a Handicap Index. No player has an inherent right to a Handicap Index without providing full evidence of their ability to the golf club's Handicap Committee. Two basic premises underlie the World Handicap System, namely that every player will try to make the best score at every hole in every round, regardless of where the round is played, and that the player will post every acceptable round for peer review. The player and the player's Handicap Committee have joint responsibility for adhering to these premises. Fair handicapping depends upon full, accurate information regarding a player's potential ability as reflected by a complete scoring record.

Another important point to consider is that this member is carrying the name of your club with them when they play away, in competitions or otherwise. Your club's reputation may be adversely affected by this member. If a member is not observing the proper procedures of the Handicap System, they may also be undermining club competitions as reflected by unfair results, or by minimizing your field size due to other members' reluctance to participate.

The World Handicap System and WA Golf give you the tools in which to enact the proper course of action. If the Handicap Committee makes a decision to modify a member's Handicap Index, two points must be determined: what new Handicap Index seems fair, and how long will the modification last? Once those have been decided upon, a letter to the golfer must be drafted and mailed. See the sample letters in the Handicap Committee Guide applying Rule 7.1a. The letter both describes the modification and gives the golfer a chance to appeal that decision prior to the new handicap becoming effective.

Please do not hesitate to call the WA Golf Handicap Department to discuss this process, and please send us a copy of your letter. Once the modification is put into the system, it becomes the golfer's official Handicap Index; if the golfer is a member at more than one club, each of the golfer's clubs should be notified to honor the modification. Of course, the golfer must continue to post scores and the Handicap Committee must continue to monitor the situation.

Do not hesitate to take carefully considered action if a member is compromising the integrity of your club and the World Handicap System. Please help us maintain accuracy and fairness in handicapping for the good of golf!

# TIPS FOR REVIEWING MEMBER SCORE POSTINGS

How does the Handicap Committee know if their members are actually posting scores or not? How can you best defend a member's handicap? Only by performing a review!

Score posting reviews are necessary for the Handicap Committee to take on.

The first thing you need is buy-in from your Golf Professional and your Board. They'll need to understand how crucial reviewing is to maintaining handicap integrity for the club. Handicap Indexes of the members directly reflect upon the reputation of the club. Once everyone is on the same page, you'll need to communicate with the members that a review will occur. This is best inserted into your Handicapping Policy and distributed to the members.

As the pro shop is in command of the tee sheet, you'll need to work with them on gaining access to this information. Some electronic systems are integrated with GHIN, which makes this task much easier. When all is said and done, you need a process of cross-checking by which you can see who is playing and when, and if there is a corresponding score posted. You'll have to decide how often during the season reviews can reasonably be performed. Is this once a month? Once a quarter? Will you check all rounds of all members or will it be a random cross-section? You can also use the Reporting feature on the USGA Admin Portal to run a report of which of your members posted scores on any selected date.

What can the Handicap Committee do if members have failed to post scores? The main responsibility of the Handicap Committee is to make certain that a member's Handicap Index reflects their potential ability. This is why taking the above steps to check score posting is imperative to determine if further action is required.

# HANDICAP ESSENTIALS

## *Posting Scores - Time is of the Essence*

We all know how important it is that our members are posting all acceptable rounds to their scoring records. But, isn't the timing of the posting important, too? After all, if a member does not post on the same day as they played their Handicap Index could be considered incorrect. Of course, backdating a score is better than not posting it at all, but in the interest of fairness scores need to be posted immediately following the round.

Because the Handicap Committee is already increasing awareness of handicapping procedures and raising the expectation for the members to post all scores, it makes sense to decide what a reasonable time period is (for your own club) to return a score. In the World Handicap System Handicap Committees should insist that scores be posted on the day of play! This will ensure that scores are included in the playing conditions calculation, are available for peer review and the player's Handicap Index can be updated for the next day.

The World Handicap System supports the concept of posting scores on the day of play (Rule 4: Submitting a Score).

Q: Since some members of a club have been posting scores days after they were made, would it be proper for the Handicap Committee to require that scores be posted on the day they were made?

A: Yes. Normally, scores should be posted as soon as possible on the day of play, after the completion of the round, and before midnight (local time). The Handicap Committee may set this timeframe as a reasonable limit within which scores must be posted, taking into account extenuating circumstances.

We encourage Handicap Committees to insert into their Handicapping Policy the day of play time frame in which scores must be returned so that the message is clear to the membership. The point is to raise the expectation to post quickly and on the day that the round is played, which in turn increases the likelihood that handicaps at your club will be accurate. Accurate handicaps create fair games and quality tournaments.

Once you have set the appropriate day of posting time frame in which to expect a score to be returned, the Committee will need to decide on an audit procedure - checking rounds played (tee sheet) against scores posted (GHIN reports). Spot checking once a month (at least during the summer) is a good idea to arrive at a percentage of scores posted vs. rounds played. How can the Committee improve the accuracy of handicaps if they don't know where the club currently stands? What action to take if you discover members are not posting is the subject of another item called "Penalty Scores"! Please refer to Rule 7.1b Applying a Penalty Score in the Rules of Handicapping for more information.

With so many convenient methods of posting, including GHIN's updated mobile app for smartphones, excuses not to post right after playing no longer exist.

## ***Why We Have an Inactive Score Posting Season***

We are often asked why we have an inactive score posting season. It is our opinion that, due to changing seasonal weather and course conditions, posting scores to the ratings issued by WA Golf during our inactive score posting season would likely result in inaccurate handicaps. When a club is issued a Course and Slope Rating, the ratings are based upon how that course plays during the peak playing season (When the most number of scores are posted) and for WA Golf that period is around July 4th.

Every Allied Golf Association is charged by the USGA, the authors of the Course Rating System, to set their own season date parameters. Every golf association adheres to these same rules, and has to do their best to judge how weather patterns affect course conditions in their region of the country.

Because we live in the Northwest, it's not possible to maintain mid-season conditions during the winter. Many times, Western Washington courses are saturated due to prolonged rains. Those in Eastern Washington and Idaho have extended periods of ice/and or snow while those in the southern part of the state from Yakima to Walla Walla are sometimes all of the above. Regardless, both have the effect of compromising the effective playing length of the golf course and maintenance practices such as green speeds and rough length, all of which are primary factors in establishing a Course Rating.

While no date parameter we choose is perfect (no one can accurately predict what Mother Nature is going to do from year to year!), we do the best we can with these dates, and there is no question that this makes us a "seasonal" golf association.

A member who resides in Palm Springs during the winter recently made the following comment to WA Golf: "My fellow WA Golf members aren't posting scores while they are still playing in Washington. I shouldn't have to post either."

Unfortunately, this member was forgetting that course conditions in Palm Springs are ideal during the winter – and conditions in Washington are not. Southern California and Arizona (and other Sunbelt states) have made the determination that their weather conditions do not adversely affect their Course Ratings during the winter. So, they are "year-round" - not "seasonal" - golf associations, and rounds played in those regions must be posted, no matter where you keep that Handicap Index.

## ***What is the Right Score to Post?***

There's a lot for you to think about when playing golf: from understanding the layout of the hole, pondering which club to use, taking the proper grip and stance - you might even be bemoaning all those bunkers you need to navigate around the green! We're sure, also, that the Rules of Golf are uppermost on your mind especially when considering the format of the game you're playing.

But once you carry a Handicap Index, you also must consider what will make your score acceptable for handicap purposes. The World Handicap System has solutions to everyday situations that may not adhere exactly to the Rules of Golf, but where the basic principles are followed.

Remember - the Handicap System is compiling data as a predictor of your scoring habits. If all scores not made in 100% compliance with the Rules of Golf were tossed out, there would be far fewer scores to post - and thereby little evidence to support a Handicap Index. So, we need to be able to post scores even when we don't finish a hole, or, for that matter, when we don't finish a round.

While most golfers are familiar with the World Handicap System's Maximum Hole Score (Net Double Bogey) procedure indicating what maximum score they are allowed on any given hole, and also are aware of the "Net Par" method of deriving a hole score, fewer seem to be knowledgeable about the third way to adjust.

In conversations with golfers, we find that most are either using Net Double Bogey or Net Par as all-inclusive methods of adjusting scores for handicap purposes. The little-known (or perhaps little understood!) "Most Likely Score" adjustment is the only type that brings the golfers own good judgment into the end result. It's also a type of adjustment that uses the golfer's actual strokes taken.

Any time a player starts, but does not complete a hole or is conceded a stroke, they must record for handicap purposes their most likely score. Most likely score is a judgment that the player must make based on their own game. It consists of the number of strokes already taken, plus the number of strokes needed to complete the hole from that position more than half the time. Your playing partner cannot help you to come up with this number! There is guidance found in Rule 3.3 to help determine your most likely score based on the distance your ball lies from the hole but ultimately you must assess each situation in which you do not finish the hole based on what you can reasonably expect to score.

A good example of this is in match play. While the Rules of Golf do not insist that you keep a scorecard in match play, your Handicap Index is a good reason to carry a card - if only to help you keep track of your strokes and so that you can calculate the proper score to post.

Let's say you are playing a par 4-hole where you do not get any strokes. Your competitor sinks their double-bogey putt from 30 feet for a six. You are on the green in 3 but are still 25 feet from the hole. Your competitor unwisely concedes the hole allowing you to pick up. You won the hole in the competition, but what score do you record for handicapping purposes? That's where you must assess the situation. What is the likelihood that you'd sink that 25-footer for a par? Most likely you would at least take two strokes to get the ball into the hole so you should record a five. But, what if it was a severe downhill putt and there was little likelihood that you could get the ball to stop within 5-feet? You are assessing the situation and thinking that you have a 1-100 chance of keeping it close and that you'd be thrilled if you could walk away with a 2-putt. In this case 3-putts would be more likely, so then you'd record a 6. And in the case that you were only 2 feet from the hole when it was conceded; well then you might record a 4.

From match play to stroke play, every situation is different. You must use your judgment to determine which rules of the Handicap system apply. In this instance, the rules regarding Net Double Bogey and Net Par would NEVER apply when you start a hole and don't finish it (unless your most likely score happens to exceed your Net Double Bogey score).

Two important points about Most Likely Score: 1) there is no limit to the number of unfinished holes a player may have in a round, and 2) your Most Likely Score cannot exceed your Net Double Bogey limit. If you find your Most Likely Score is higher, you must make a downward adjustment and record your maximum number of strokes for that hole.

## ***Peer Review is More Than Just a Definition in the Handicap System***

Let's start with the official definition of Peer Review from the Rules of Handicapping:

Peer review is the process by which a score or Handicap Index can be confirmed or challenged (see Rule 4.4).

There are two essential elements of peer review:

1. Members of a golf club must have a reasonable and regular opportunity to play together,
2. Access must be provided to scoring records, as well as to a Handicap Index list, for inspection by others, including but not limited to, fellow club members.

Most golfers would imagine that peer review means their club's Handicap Committee is performing some sort of score posting auditing behind the scenes. It should be an accepted fact that a dedicated committee, who is great at crossing t's and dotting i's, is busy at the club doing administrative tasks. Of course, a club's Handicap Committee regularly examining the postings of the membership is a crucial component of compliance with the Handicap System. But peer review really involves each and every golfer. Are you doing your part? The club must provide ample opportunity for members to get together - this means regular play as well as engaging in some healthy competition.

But what do the players need to provide? We're all very busy concentrating on our own game, but what about your partners' game? Can you support their scores? Members must be actively involved in observing the play of fellow members and even take it further - to let their Handicap Committee know if they witness behavior contrary to the Rules of Golf or the spirit of the Handicap System. Peer review can happen on the golf course while you're playing and in the clubhouse while you're posting.

Many times during the season we get phone calls from members asking us what we're going to do about Joe Golfer's handicap: it's too high, it's too low, they use a foot wedge, they aren't posting. They've complained in the locker room and now they're complaining to WA Golf. We are compelled to tell them something they just don't want to hear - WA Golf can't do anything about an individual's Handicap Index or scoring record. We just don't have the power.

That power lies solely with the club. The club must create transparency with handicapping. And the players must take advantage of the amiable environment by approaching the Committee with concerns. Only then can the Committee take appropriate action. We certainly aren't advocating turning our clubs into mini police-states, or taking the fun out of the game, but this is golf - it isn't basketball. We don't have referees while we play! We must become our own referees. That's peer review.

## ***There Are Only 7 Legitimate Reasons Not To Post Your Score***

Most golfers would be surprised to learn that there are only seven (yes, 7!) legitimate conditions under which a score should not be posted to their scoring record. 99% of the time, their score needs to be posted - in fact if they don't post, something could occur that also might surprise them. They could be risking a penalty score, a modification to their Handicap Index, or worse - it could be withdrawn completely.

So the next time you find yourself with a handy excuse at the ready, or you hear someone else trying to justify why they don't need to post their score, make sure it's one of the reasons listed here and not something unwarranted like "the clubhouse was closed," or "I used a mulligan," or even sillier, "I was playing Winter Rules."

Don't post your score:

- When fewer than seven holes are played (if you played seven to thirteen holes, you have a nine-hole score; if you played fourteen or more holes, you have an 18-hole score! Post Net Par on the remaining holes not played).
- When made on a golf course that is in an area in which an inactive season established by the golf association is in effect (like November 15th through the end of February in the area within the boundaries of WA Golf).
- When scores are made on a golf course with no Course Rating or Slope Rating.
- When, as a condition of the competition, the maximum number of clubs allowed is less than 14, or the types of clubs are limited, as for example, a competition that allows only iron clubs.
- When a player plays alone.
- When a player uses non-conforming clubs, non-conforming balls, or non-conforming tees.
- When a player incurs a second breach of Rule 4.3 in the Rules of Golf for using equipment that is not allowed during the round.

Taking a "mulligan" does not negate your score for Handicap Purposes!

Sure, "mulligans" do occur and they are not recognized under the Rules of Golf. However, the World Handicap System doesn't want to eliminate a round that contains seventeen holes of valid scores if a "mulligan" was taken on a single hole. So, for handicap purposes, the hole score made with the mulligan is tossed out and replaced with a hole score that is not considered out of the ordinary for the player, based on his Course Handicap. The adjustment for that hole becomes Net Par (plus any handicap strokes the player should receive), as per Rule 3.2 of the Rules of Handicapping ("When a Hole is Not Played")

# HANDICAP ALLOWANCES

Handicap allowances are designed to make all forms of play equitable. In some forms of play it is equitable for players to use their full Course Handicap as their Playing Handicap. In some team competitions, using full Course Handicaps would give a higher-handicapped side (team) an advantage over a lower-handicapped side, thus less than a full Course Handicap is recommended in to be used as the Playing Handicap. Handicap Allowances have no effect in determining a Handicap Index. A Handicap Index relates to 18 holes. Each allowance in Appendix C applies to an 18-hole round, even though the competition may consist of more than one round. For a more complete list of recommended handicap allowances, please review Pages 91-92 in the Rules of Handicapping.

**To make proper use of handicap allowances, please follow these steps in order:**

**Step 1: Players must determine their Course Handicap by applying their Handicap Index to the Course Rating, Slope Rating, and Par for the set of tees to be played.**

**Step 2: If players are competing from different tees or men and women from the same tees players must apply the adjustment if par is different between tee sets.**

**Step 3: Players should then apply the handicap allowances for the appropriate format of play.**

**It is vitally important that the proper order listed above and use of Handicap Allowances as recommended by the World Handicap System be followed to provide fair and equitable competitions. For precision in determining an accurate Playing Handicap, no rounding should occur until after the final step.**

Since using full Course Handicaps would be favoring the higher-handicapped sides, we encourage you to follow the WHS recommendations found in Appendix C (Rules of Handicapping, pg. 91). These are backed by years of solid research to facilitate fair play. Below, you will find recommended Handicap Allowances for more commonly played competitions.

## MATCH PLAY

### Singles

In singles match play, a match is won by the player who is leading by a number of holes greater than the number of holes remaining to be played. The Rules of Handicapping advise using 100% of a player's Course Handicap for handicap allowances. The higher-handicapped player receives the full difference in Course Handicap between the two players; the lower-handicapped player plays from scratch.

### Team Events

Four-Ball Match Play: The Course Handicap of all four players is reduced by the Course Handicap of the player with the lowest handicap, who then plays from scratch. Each of the three other players is allowed 90% of the difference.

Chapman or Pinehurst Match Play: The partner with the lower Course Handicap receives 60% of their Course Handicap. The partner with the higher Course Handicap receives 40% of their Course Handicap. Add the percentage allowances together before rounding, then round off the total with .5 or more rounded upward. The side with the higher Course Handicap receives the difference between the Course Handicaps of the sides. The lower-handicapped side shall play from scratch.

## STROKE PLAY

### Individual Events

The competitor with the lowest net score for the stipulated round or rounds is the winner.

**Individual Stroke Play:** Each competitor receives 95% of their full Course Handicap.

**Stableford:** The scoring in Stableford competitions is made by points awarded in relation to a fixed score (usually “*par*” or net “*par*”) at each hole. The winner is the competitor who scores the highest number of points (See “The Rules of Golf,” Rule 21.1b).

Each competitor receives 95% of their full Course Handicap.

### Team Events

**Four-Ball Stroke Play:** In Four-Ball Stroke Play, two competitors play as partners, each playing their own ball. The lower score of the partners is the score for the hole.

In Four-Ball Stroke Play, strokes are taken as assigned on the player’s respective stroke allocation table, and players must play from the sets of tees designated by the Committee in charge of the competition.

Each competitor receives 85% of their Course Handicap.

**Best Ball of Four:** Four players play as a side (team), each playing their own ball. The lowest score of the side (team) is the score for the hole.

Each competitor receives 75% of their full Course Handicap.

**Two Best Balls of Four:** Four players each play their own ball and the two best balls on each hole is the score for the hole.

Each competitor receives 85% of their full Course Handicap.

**Chapman or Pinehurst Stroke Play:** In Chapman or Pinehurst stroke play, two players play as partners, each partner plays from the teeing ground and then plays the partner’s ball for the second shot. After the second shot, partner’s select the ball with which they wish to score and play the ball alternately to complete the hole.

The partner with the lower Course Handicap receives 60% of their Course Handicap. The partner with the higher Course Handicap receives 40% of their Course Handicap. Add the percentage allowances together before rounding, then round off the total with .5 or more rounded upward.

# PLAYERS COMPETING FROM DIFFERENT TEES OR MEN AND WOMEN FROM THE SAME SET OF TEES

Under the World Handicap System, Course Handicaps are a reflection of the number of strokes a player needs to play to Par of the set of tees they are playing. Therefore, when players are competing from different tees there is no adjustment needed to the calculation of a Course Handicap unless the tees have a difference in Par. The same applies to Men and Women competing from the same or a separate set of tees. As long as the Par is the same then converting your Handicap Index to a Course Handicap and heading to the first tee will suffice!

If, however, you are playing from tees that have a difference in Par, additional strokes may need to be added to the standard calculation of the Course Handicap for equity purposes.

In Stroke or Match Play formats where results are recorded as gross or net scores, a player competing from a set of tees with a higher Par must receive additional strokes for the round, equal to the difference between the Par of the tees they are playing and the tees with the lowest Par.

As an alternative, when the majority of the field are playing from the tees with the highest Par, players competing from a set of tees with a lower Par may be allocated less strokes for the round, equal to the difference between the Pars.

In Stableford formats, where a player's total number of Stableford Points for the round is compared directly against that of every other player, no additional strokes are applied to the standard calculation of the Course Handicap when the Par is different between tees.

# ALLOCATION OF HANDICAP STROKES

What Does the handicap row on the Scorecard Mean as it relates to Holes on a Golf Course? The #1 Handicap hole on your golf course does not mean it is the “hardest hole.” The World Handicap System recommends using Course Rating data to determine the combined difficulty of each hole using the Course Rating and Bogey Ratings relative to Par. From there, the allocation of strokes should be distributed throughout the scorecard in an even fashion with respect to both Stroke Play and Match Play using the “Triad System” described in Appendix E of the Rules of Handicapping.

Upon request, WA Golf will provide your club and/or golf course with a report that gives a recommended Stroke Index Allocation for every set of tees that has a Course Rating. The responsibility to determine the allocation used at the course is entirely up to the club and alternative methods to determine the allocation can be used.

The USGA recommends that each course has one allocation for men and one for women, based on the most commonly played set of tees for each gender. Most often, odd-numbered strokes should be assigned to the holes on the first nine and even numbered strokes to the holes on the second nine, unless the second nine is decidedly more difficult.

It is a good idea to review your allocation when a Course Rating is performed every 7-10 years or when major changes occur. After WA Golf has conducted a Course Rating, a stroke index recommendation will be provided to the golf course along with the results of the Course Rating. The club can still change the allocation between Course Ratings if they choose.

When a change to your allocation occurs, it is the club's responsibility to publish it on the course scorecard. WA Golf must also be notified of the change to update the allocation for Hole-by-Hole score posting on GHIN. Having your stroke index allocation accurate and easily accessible to all golfers is important as handicap strokes play a vital role in the calculation of Net Double Bogey and Net Par.

If you have further questions regarding Stroke Index Allocation or wish to request a recommendation based on Course Rating data, please contact Nate Schroeder at [nschroeder@wagolf.org](mailto:nschroeder@wagolf.org).

# ADJUSTING HOLE SCORES

There comes a time when all golfers must make adjustments to the score that they will post because they have either not completed a hole (your opponent gives you a putt in Match Play, etc.), not played the hole at all or played it other than under the Rules of Golf (they skipped a hole that was under construction, took a mulligan on the first tee, etc.) or their score for a hole exceeded the maximum that they were allowed to take. The proper procedures for adjusting hole scores is explained in Rule 3 of the Rules of Handicapping.

## 3.1 Maximum Hole Score for Handicap Purposes

Before a player has established a Handicap Index their maximum hole score will be par plus five strokes for every hole.

After a player has established a Handicap Index their maximum score for each hole played is limited to Net Double Bogey. Net Double Bogey is calculated by taking Par of the hole and adding two strokes plus any handicap stroke(s) that the player receives on that hole. If the player has a plus handicap they will subtract strokes from a hole.

There is no limit to the number of holes in around where a net double bogey adjustment may be applied.

Where a Course Handicap is calculated at more than 54 and a player receives 4 or more strokes on a hole, the maximum hole score is par plus five for handicap purposes.

We highly recommend players post their hole by hole scores as the system will calculate Net Double Bogey and post the correct Adjusted Gross Score.

## 3.2 When a Hole is Not Played

There are various circumstances that may result in a round not being completed and some holes not being played. A score may only be used for handicap purposes if, among other things, the round has been played over at least the minimum number of holes required for either a 9-hole or an 18-hole score to be acceptable. The minimum of holes for a 9-hole score is seven and for 18-holes is fourteen. Where the minimum number of holes has been completed and the reason for a player not playing a hole is valid, the player must use Net Par for the holes not played. Net par is equal to the par of the hole plus any handicap strokes the player is entitled to receive based on their Course Handicap.

## 3.3 When a Hole is Started But Player Does Not Hole Out

A most likely score is the score a player must post for handicap purposes if a hole is started but not completed or if the player is conceded a stroke. The most likely score consists of the number of strokes already taken, plus, in the player's best judgment, the number of strokes the player would take to complete the hole from that position more than half the time. This number may not exceed the player's maximum hole score.

# COURSE HANDICAPS EXPLAINED

Figuring out a Course Handicap is necessary in order to make use of your Handicap Index. Don't ever just drop the "tenths" from your Index and use it to play. You may not like the result!

Applying your Handicap Index to the Course Rating, Slope Rating, and Par, through the Course Handicap Chart or an online Course Handicap calculator is what makes your handicap "portable" from course to course and lets you know how many strokes you will receive on the set of tees you are playing. The purpose of this procedure is to give you enough strokes to "play to Par" on that particular set of tees.

How to arrive at your Course Handicap:

Divide the Slope Rating of the tees played by 113, then multiply by your Handicap Index. The result is then added to the difference between Course Rating and Par. The resulting figure is rounded off to the nearest whole number (.5 or more is rounded upward).

Example:  $11.4 \text{ (Handicap Index)} \times (128 \text{ (Slope Rating of tees)} / 113) + (72.0 \text{ (Course Rating)} - 72 \text{ (Par)}) = 12.913274$

12.913274; round to 13 (resulting Course Handicap)

You can't play with an Index - you must convert it in order to actually use it. Accurately converting your Handicap Index to a Course Handicap will also ensure you can apply Net Double Bogey accurately when posting your score.

Before each round, you should know your current Handicap Index and check the Course Handicap Chart or use an online calculator to determine your Course Handicap for the set of tees you are playing.

Since your Course Handicap is a reflection of the number of strokes needed to play to Par of the set of tees you are playing, you can also use it to determine your "Target Score" to play to your handicap. Simply add your Course Handicap to the Par of the set of tees you are playing to determine your "Target Score".

You can also look at your net score to determine if you've played to your handicap. A net score at or below Par means you've played to or exceeded your handicap for the round, while a net score over Par means you did not play to your handicap.

# COURSE RATING BASICS

The Course Rating System is an enhancement of the World Handicap System and affects all WA Golf Members in the calculation of their Handicap Indexes. Although it can seem a bit complicated, the net result of the Course Rating System is that it allows a player to move from golf course to golf course and get a fair indication of their level of play, regardless of where they play, the set of tees or their ability level.

Let's review the essential elements that make up Course Rating:

- **Scratch Golfer:** Is a player who can play to a Handicap of zero on any and all rated golf courses. For rating purposes, the male scratch golfer hits a 250-yard tee shot and can reach a 470-yard hole in two shots at sea level. The female scratch hits a 210 yard tee shot and can reach a 400 yard hole in two shots.
- **Bogey Golfer:** A male bogey golfer has a Handicap of about 20 and can hit a 200 tee shot and can reach a 370-yard hole in 2 shots. A female bogey golfer has a Course Handicap of about 22 and can hit a 150 tee shot and can reach a 280 yard hole in 2 shots.
- **Course Rating:** The evaluation of the overall difficulty of the golf course under normal course and weather conditions for the scratch golfer and is expressed in strokes taken to one decimal point (i.e. 72.6)
- **Bogey Rating:** The evaluation of the overall difficulty of the golf course under normal course and weather conditions for the bogey golfer and is also expressed in strokes taken to one decimal point (i.e. 102.4)
- **Slope Rating:** The mark that indicates the measurement of relative difficulty of a course for players who are NOT scratch golfers as compared to the Course Rating. Slope is derived from the difference between the Course and Bogey Ratings multiplied by a factor of 5.381 for Men and 4.24 for Women.

**The Process:** Correct and accurate yardage (Both measured and any of the four yardage corrections defined in the Effective Playing Length section of the Course Rating System) is imperative to Course Rating. It is so imperative because it makes up 95% of the Course Rating and about 90-95% of the Bogey Rating. Once the correct measured yardage is known, trained Course Raters assess the golf course, one hole at a time. We then proceed to the landing zones (As defined above), where the ball lands and rolls, for each of four players: Scratch and Bogey, Male and Female.

In each of the landing zones we assess the effect of 10 obstacles on the scoring potential of the Scratch and Bogey golfers. The obstacles are evaluated on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being low and 10 being high. The closer obstacles are to the center of fairway landing zones or the green the higher obstacle rating.

The Effective Playing Length (EPL) Corrections: While most of the rating is derived directly from the officially measured yardage, there are certain features of the course that can effectively change the length of a course. These include Elevation, Roll, Dogleg, Forced Lay-up, Wind and Altitude.

The Obstacles: Are a numerical evaluation of all obstacles on a golf course. Generally, the nearer the obstacles are to the center of the landing zone, the higher the rating values.

- Topography: The impact of terrain on stance, lie and the player's ability to hit the next shot
- Fairway: The evaluation of the difficulty of landing and keeping a ball in the fairway from tee to green.
- Green Target: The probability of hitting and holding the green from a fairway landing zone or tee. The length of the shot as well as the effective diameter of the green determines these values.
- Recovery and Rough: If a player misses the green or fairway landing zone, how difficult will it be to recover.
- Bunkers: The measurement of the effect bunkers will have on play based upon their proximity to target areas and difficulty of recovery
- Crossing Obstacles: Consists of penalty areas, extreme rough (including desert) and out of bounds which are carried to play the hole. How far of a shot the player must hit to safely carry the crossing obstacle determines these values.
- Lateral Obstacles: Consists of penalty areas, extreme rough (including desert) and out of bounds which come in to play laterally on the hole. How far of a shot the player must hit and how far offline from the center of the landing area the lateral obstacle is determines these values.
- Trees: How difficult it is for the player to recover from the trees.
- Green Surface: Is a measurement of the actual difficulty of putting on a green. Stimpmeter speed, slope and contouring are all factors
- Psychological: The system automatically calculates this factor based on the cumulative effect of multiple obstacles.

# TEMPORARY GREENS AND/OR TEES

A golf club's Handicap Committee must notify Washington Golf (1-800-643-6410) when temporary tees and/or greens are utilized.

WA Golf offers guidance if scores made in those situations are accepted for handicap purposes, and whether the Course Rating and Slope Rating should be modified temporarily. The Handicap Committee has a responsibility to notify its members that when a hole is not played due to construction, the score for that hole must be Net Par. (See Section 3.2)

- Temporary Tees - If temporary tees are used, scores should be posted for handicap purposes to the issued Course and Slope Rating provided the overall effective playing length of the course can be maintained. Typically tee markers on the non-affected holes could be moved to offset the change in length. Or the temporary tees may be offsetting a change in length due to extreme conditions, i.e., extremely dry or wet conditions.
- Temporary **Alternate Permanent Greens** - If temporary alternate permanent greens are created, essentially built to the specs of the original green, contact WA Golf.
- Temporary **Non-Permanent Greens** - Normally a mowed-out area in front or near the normal green can change its position from time to time, and doesn't reflect normal green conditions (e.g., the "green" is created by simply mowing a circle in the fairway and placing a hole location in the center). The score posted for these holes is Net Par.

## Q&A: Most common questions around temporary greens and/or tees

Q: May a club accept scores for handicap purposes if temporary greens or tees are being used?

A: Yes. If the Rules of Golf can be followed during the reconstruction period, scores should be posted. The club must contact its authorized golf association (WA Golf) for advice regarding its specific situation. If a temporary green (not an alternate permanent green) is played, the recommendation of the authorized golf association may be for the club to advise players to post Net Par for any applicable holes. (See Section 4-2 and 14-5.)

Q: How many holes with temporary tees can I play before I do not post a score?

A: There is no limit to the number of holes played with temporary tees that would keep a player from posting a score. If the overall playing length of the golf course cannot be maintained a representative of the club should contact WA Golf and discuss the club's score posting alternatives.

Q: How many temporary non-permanent greens can there be before I cannot post a score?

A: Temporary non-permanent greens are treated as holes not played under the Rules of Golf as they don't reflect normal green conditions and the Course and Slope Ratings of the course. According to Rule 2.2, a player must play a minimum of seven holes for a nine-hole score, and fourteen for an 18-hole score to be posted. Thus, a maximum of two holes for a nine-hole score, or four holes for an 18-hole score, could be temporary non-permanent greens, within the nine or 18 holes, to maintain the score to be posted, provided all other aspects of the score are acceptable.

# PREFERRED LIES NEWSLETTER

On the first Wednesday of the month, every Handicap Chairperson should receive, by e-mail, a copy of our monthly newsletter, Preferred Lies.

In this newsletter you will find pertinent information about the World Handicap System, GHIN, and current happenings at WA Golf. Many times, this newsletter is where you will first learn of something new, such as schedules, new WA Golf programs, and GHIN updates, so please take the time to read through it.

If you have something you would like to contribute, we would love to hear from you - and so would your fellow Handicap Chairpersons!

If you have not received the newsletter, contact us so we can make sure we have your correct email address and ensure you will get future installments. We are also happy to add other club officers to our email list so they may get the newsletter as well - we just need names, titles, and email addresses.

Issues will include Admin Portal tips, updates to GHIN programs, and of course - more information about the World Handicap System and Course Rating System.

# WA GOLF MEMBER BENEFITS

WA Golf offers many benefits to its members and member clubs/facilities.

## WA Golf Member Benefits:

- USGA GHIN Handicap Index
- Washington Golf Pass - exclusive access to great opportunities and savings at golf courses throughout the state, Northern Idaho, and beyond. Not available for juniors or YOC Members.
- Exclusive WA Golf Deals and Discounts. [List of WA Golf Benefits](#)
- WA Golf Member Events: Non-competitive Casual Golf Days and eligibility to compete in the Association-wide Net Four-Ball Match Play
- GHIN Mobile App: Post scores, view handicap index and score history, course handicap calculator, handicap index lookup and more.
- First-class WA Golf amateur championships and WA Golf Winter Series at top course throughout Washington and Northern Idaho.
- Access to PNGA All-Access Calendar – a comprehensive schedule of tournaments across the PNW. [Link to All-Access Calendar](#)
- Automatic membership and access to all benefits with the Pacific Northwest Golf Association (PNGA)
- Subscription to *Pacific Northwest Golfer* magazine
- WA Golf Multi-Member Rebate Program. [Multi-Member Rebate Form](#)

## WA Golf Facility Benefits (hosting a WA Golf Club through the facility):

- Complimentary Course Rating – as necessary per WA Golf Course Rating schedule (7-10 years)
- Listed on the online WA Golf Member Club Directory
- WA Golf Handicap Computer Hardware – available onsite for score posting
- WA Golf Support (Rules of Golf and Amateur Status, Handicapping, Tournaments)
- Eligibility to advertise tournaments and events on PNGA All-Access Calendar (Tournaments open to the general public – not simply your facility's club members) [All-Access Event Submission Form](#)

## WA Golf Club Benefits (for those clubs that are eligible):

- WA Golf Handicap Computer Hardware – available onsite for score posting
- WA Golf Support (Rules of Golf and Amateur Status, Handicapping, Tournaments)
- Ability to participate in WA Golf Join Now program, offering club membership sign-ups for your club through WA Golf website – An easy way to grow club membership. [Online Join & Renew Information Form](#)
- Eligibility to the Club Representative Program. [Club Representative Sign-Up Form](#)
- Support and Access to USGA Tournament Management Software (Powered by Golf Genius)
- Access to the USGA Admin Portal – web-based tool to manage club data

**For More information on WA Golf Member, Facility or Club Benefits, visit the “Join or Renew” tab at [wagolf.org](http://wagolf.org) or call Torrin Westwood at (253) 214-2919**

## “JOIN NOW” FEATURE

“Join Now” is a free membership benefit afforded to all WA Golf member clubs. We are always working to strengthen our membership, and we want to help potential members identify and join the right club for them. Through our marketing efforts, we direct these potential members to our [Online Join Webpage](#), and we want them to find your club there! Visitors to the site find a map of available clubs, as well as an alphabetical listing of clubs, their membership rate, as well as the club benefits they offer.

This function can also be a convenient way for your membership to renew each year. Just send your members a link in an email and avoid the hassle of hundreds of paper forms and checks to deposit. Our system processes the transaction, activates the golfer in the Admin Portal, as well as sets an “end date” aka inactivation date. Additionally, our system offers the golfer the option to be auto-renewed next year, keeping their membership “active” and saving the club the administrative work of managing that golfer’s membership.

In 2020 we have had over 7,000 transactions for our clubs. This program continues to grow and improve, as more clubs elect to participate in this free service, we continue to look for ways to improve the system. This option is an easy way to lighten the workload for your club’s administrators. It is very simple to get started - all we need to set-up your club for 2021 is your rate, your membership benefits, and some contact information. Simply fill out this electronic form - [Click Here](#). This function truly makes managing your club easier.

If you are interested in learning more, don’t hesitate to contact us. Please contact Torrin Westwood, Manager of Membership and Club Relations at [twestwood@wagolf.org](mailto:twestwood@wagolf.org) for more information.

# JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP

In addition to Regular Members (19 years old and older), Washington Golf does offer Junior Memberships (Under the age of 19). Junior Members of Washington Golf are entitled to many of the same benefits as Regular Members, minus the Golf Pass (which is an adult membership benefit only).

In order to be a Junior Member at GHIN you must be below the age of 19 on January 1st of a given year. If a golfer begins the year as a Junior Member, they will continue to hold that status for the entire year. If a Junior Member turns 19 any day after January 1st, do not change their membership status at that time or your club will be billed for both the Junior and Regular Memberships. If a Junior Member turns 19 during a year, their you will have to change their membership type to “R” on January 1st of the following year.

In order to identify a player as a Junior Member, the club must enter both the birthdate in that field in the player’s membership record at GHIN and the Type of Membership must be changed to “J”. The WA Golf Junior Membership Fee is \$5 per year.

Have you thought about forming a Junior Club at your club? What better way to get juniors introduced to golf, the World Handicap System and Washington Golf? What better way to grow the game?

Please contact Torrin Westwood, Manager of Membership and Club Relations at [twestwood@wagolf.org](mailto:twestwood@wagolf.org) for more information.

# CLUB REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM

The purpose of the Club Representative Program is to provide a direct line of communication between the WA Golf and our members. Having a Club Representative at your club is a major benefit entitled to our Member Clubs, **and it is free!**

Club Representatives operate as a liaison between our member-clubs and WA Golf. Club Representatives receive monthly newsletters and emails sharing association information including details regarding benefits and opportunities available only to our members. We are always hopeful that the Club Representative will take time to share our information with their club. Additionally, Club Representatives are always invited to our Annual Meeting, which is a fabulous opportunity to hear first-hand about new opportunities available to WA Golf members.

We encourage every club to consider electing someone to participate in this program. Appointing a Club Representative is easy, and getting started is as simple as filling out the [Club Representative Sign-Up Form](#). Over the years we have found that Handicap Chairs often serve as great Club Reps in that they are already communicating with WA Golf as well as their club members.

**For more information on what Club Representatives do, and how to get involved, head to [www.wagolf.org](http://www.wagolf.org), then click on “Volunteer” underneath the “Connect” tab at the top of the page, or call Torrin Westwood at (253) 214-2919.**

# BECOME A WA GOLF VOLUNTEER

Here are the areas where we most need dedicated volunteer assistance from those who would like to give back to the game.

## **WA Golf/PNGA Championship Volunteer**

Each year the WA Golf/PNGA Championship Department needs volunteers to help with conducting our Championships of excellence. Volunteers may be asked to be starters, marshals, pace of play timers, forecaddies, live scoring recorders, score posting, etc. We are always eager to build up our Championship Department volunteer team. Please email Adam Gracik, Assistant Director of Rules and Competition at [agracik@wagolf.org](mailto:agracik@wagolf.org) for more information.

## **WA Golf Course Rating Team**

Each year, teams of trained course rating volunteers assist WA Golf in measuring, compiling and analyzing the physical attributes of 30-40 Washington and Northern Idaho golf courses including (but not limited to) roll, elevation changes, doglegs and forced lay-ups, prevailing winds, altitude, topography, fairway width, green target size, recoverability and rough, bunkers, out of bounds and extreme rough, water and other hazards. These evaluations provide each course with accurate measurements for each set of tees including yardages, and Course and Slope Rating. The Course Rating System is an enhancement of the World Handicap System, ensuring that players of differing abilities are able to participate in enjoyable and competitive games. We are always eager to build up our Course Rating team and look forward to bringing new contributors into the WA Golf family. Please email Nate Schroeder, Director of Handicapping and Course Rating, at [nschroeder@wagolf.org](mailto:nschroeder@wagolf.org) for more information.



# Washington Golf 2021 Championships

Gold Mountain GC (Olympic)  
Bremerton, Wash.  
Site of the Men's Amateur  
July 6-8, 2021

## Champion of Champions | The Home Course, DuPont, Wash.

Apr 29-30

Men: No age limit | Senior Men: Must be 55 or older by 4/29/21

Women: No age limit | Senior Women: Must be 50 or older by 4/29/21

Entry Deadline: 4/12

## Men's Four-Ball | Desert Canyon GR, Orondo, Wash.

May 13-14

No age limit » Handicap: 36.4

Entry Deadline: 4/28

## Senior Men's Four-Ball | Desert Canyon GR, Orondo, Wash.

May 13-14

Senior: 55 or older by 5/13/21 | Super Senior: 65 or older by 5/13/21 » Handicap: 36.4

Entry Deadline: 4/28

## Women's Four-Ball | Rainier G&CC, Seattle, Wash.

May 17-18

No age limit » Handicap: 40.4

Entry Deadline: 5/3

## Senior & Super Senior Women's Amateur | Fairwood G&CC, Renton, Wash.

Jun 15-16

Senior: 50 or older by 6/15/21 | Super Senior: 65 or older by 6/15/21 » Handicap: 40.4

Entry Deadline: 6/1

## Women's Amateur & Mid-Amateur | Fairwood G&CC, Renton, Wash.

Jun 15-17

Amateur: No age limit | Mid-Amateur: 25 or older by 6/15/21 » Handicap: 16.4 (Amateur), 40.4 (Mid-Amateur)

Entry Deadline: 6/1

## Men's Amateur Qualifier | Gold Mountain GC (Cascade), Bremerton, Wash.

Jun 21

No age limit » Handicap: 8.4

Entry Deadline: 6/14

## Men's Amateur Qualifier | Kalispel G&CC, Spokane, Wash.

Jun 22

No age limit » Handicap: 8.4

Entry Deadline: 6/14

## Men's Amateur Qualifier | The Home Course, DuPont, Wash.

Jun 23

No age limit » Handicap: 8.4

Entry Deadline: 6/14

## Men's Amateur Qualifier | Wine Valley GC, Walla Walla, Wash.

Jun 24

No age limit » Handicap: 8.4

Entry Deadline: 6/14

## Men's Amateur Qualifier | North Bellingham GC, Bellingham, Wash.

Jun 25

No age limit » Handicap: 8.4

Entry Deadline: 6/14

## Men's Amateur | Gold Mountain GC (Olympic), Bremerton, Wash.

Jul 6-8

No age limit » Handicap: 8.4

Entry Deadline: 6/14

## Parent-Child Chapman | Lake Spanaway GC, Tacoma, Wash.

Jul 16

No age limit » Handicap: 36.4 (Men), 40.4 (Women)

Entry Deadline: 7/5

## Mixed Chapman | Canterwood G&CC, Gig Harbor, Wash.

Aug 23

No age limit » Handicap: 36.4 (Men), 40.4 (Women)

Entry Deadline: 8/9

## Men's Mid-Amateur | Bellingham G&CC, Bellingham, Wash.

Aug 30-31

Must be 25 or older by 8/30/21 » Handicap: 9.9

Entry Deadline: 8/16

## Senior & Super Senior Men's Amateur | Kitsap G&CC, Bremerton, Wash.

Sept 21-23

Senior: 55 or older by 9/21/21 | Super Senior: 65 or older by 9/21/21 » Handicap: 12.4

Entry Deadline: 8/31

**REGISTER at [wagolf.org/championships](http://wagolf.org/championships)**

Silvies Valley Ranch  
Seneca, Ore.  
Site of the Men's Mid-Amateur  
September 14-16, 2021



# Pacific Northwest Golf Association 2021 Championships

**Senior Men's Amateur | Wine Valley GC, Walla Walla, Wash.**

Must be 55 or older by 6/8/21 » Handicap: 8.4

**Jun 8-10**

Entry Deadline: 5/24

**Super Senior Men's Amateur | Wine Valley GC, Walla Walla, Wash.**

Must be 65 or older by 6/8/21 » Handicap: 8.4

**Jun 8-10**

Entry Deadline: 5/24

**Senior Women's Amateur | Wine Valley GC, Walla Walla, Wash.**

Must be 50 or older by 6/8/21 » Handicap: 12.4

**Jun 8-10**

Entry Deadline: 5/24

**Super Senior Women's Amateur | Wine Valley GC, Walla Walla, Wash.**

Must be 65 or older by 6/8/21 » Handicap: 12.4

**Jun 8-10**

Entry Deadline: 5/24

**Women's Amateur | The Home Course, DuPont, Wash.**

No age limit » Handicap: 8.4

**Jul 19-23**

Entry Deadline: 6/28

**Women's Mid-Amateur | The Home Course, DuPont, Wash.**

Must be 25 or older by 7/19/21 » Handicap: 12.4

**Jul 19-23**

Entry Deadline: 6/28

**Men's Amateur | The Idaho Club, Sandpoint, Id.**

No age limit » Handicap: 4.4

**Jul 26-31**

Entry Deadline: 7/5

**Men's Master-40 Amateur | Wildhorse R&C, Pendleton, Ore.**

Must be 40 or older by 8/9/21 » Handicap: 8.4

**Aug 9-13**

Entry Deadline: 7/19

**Junior Boys' Amateur | Palouse Ridge GC, Pullman, Wash.**

Must be 18 or younger on 8/20/21 » Handicap: 8.4

**Aug 16-20**

Entry Deadline: 7/26

**Junior Girls' Amateur | Palouse Ridge GC, Pullman, Wash.**

Must be 18 or younger on 8/20/21 » Handicap: 12.4

**Aug 16-20**

Entry Deadline: 7/26

**Men's Mid-Amateur | Silvies Valley Ranch, Seneca, Ore.**

Must be 25 or older by 9/14/21 » Handicap: 8.4

**Sept 14-16**

Entry Deadline: 8/30

**REGISTER at [thepnga.org/championships](https://thepnga.org/championships)**



# 2021 USGA Qualifying

**U.S. Open Local | Gold Mountain GC (Olympic), Bremerton, Wash.**

No age limit » Handicap: 1.4

**May 3**

Entry Deadline: 4/21

**U.S. Open Local | Gamble Sands, Brewster, Wash.**

No age limit » Handicap: 1.4

**May 10**

Entry Deadline: 4/21

**U.S. Senior Open | Sudden Valley G&CC, Bellingham, Wash.**

Must be 50 or older by 7/8/21 » Handicap: 3.4

**May 18**

Entry Deadline: 5/12

**U.S. Girls' Junior Amateur | McCormick Woods GC, Port Orchard, Wash.**

Cannot be 19 on or before 7/17/21 » Handicap: 9.4

**Jun 1**

Entry Deadline: 5/19

**U.S. Junior Amateur | The Club at Rock Creek, Coeur d'Alene, Id.**

Cannot be 19 on or before 7/24/21 » Handicap: 4.4

**Jun 3**

Entry Deadline: 5/26

**U.S. Open Final | Meadow Springs CC, Richland, Wash.**

No age limit » Handicap: 1.4

**Jun 7**

Entry Deadline: 4/21

**U.S. Junior Amateur | Port Ludlow GC, Port Ludlow, Wash.**

Cannot be 19 on or before 7/24/21 » Handicap: 4.4

**Jun 15**

Entry Deadline: 5/26

**U.S. Amateur | Palouse Ridge GC, Pullman, Wash.**

No age limit » Handicap: 2.4

**Jun 29**

Entry Deadline: 6/23

**U.S. Amateur | The Home Course, DuPont, Wash.**

No age limit » Handicap: 2.4

**Jul 12**

Entry Deadline: 6/23

**U.S. Women's Amateur | Chambers Bay, University Place, Wash.**

No age limit » Handicap: 5.4

**Jul 13**

Entry Deadline: 6/16

**U.S. Senior Amateur | Suncadia Resort (Prospector), Cle Elum, Wash.**

Must be 55 or older by 8/28/21 » Handicap: 7.4

**Aug 3**

Entry Deadline: 7/14

**U.S. Mid-Amateur | Canterwood G&CC, Gig Harbor, Wash.**

Must be 25 or older by 9/25/21 » Handicap: 3.4

**Aug 24**

Entry Deadline: 8/4

**U.S. Amateur Four-Ball | Eagles Pride GC, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.**

No age limit » Handicap: 5.4

**Sept 8**

Entry Deadline: 8/11



## REGISTER at [usga.org](https://usga.org)



## DEPARTMENT DIRECTORY

1010 S 336<sup>TH</sup> ST. SUITE 310 | FEDERAL WAY, WA 98003

206.526.1238 (P) | 844.339.5411 (F)

### EXECUTIVE

<b>Troy Andrew</b> , <i>CEO/Executive Director</i>	253-214-2920   <a href="mailto:tandrew@wagolf.org">tandrew@wagolf.org</a>
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### BILLING

<b>Heather Wilson</b> , <i>Controller</i>	253-214-2912   <a href="mailto:hwilson@wagolf.org">hwilson@wagolf.org</a>
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### OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

<b>Rachel von Cluck</b> , <i>Office Administrator</i>	253-214-2910   <a href="mailto:rvoncluck@wagolf.org">rvoncluck@wagolf.org</a>
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### CHAMPIONSHIP

<b>Scotty Crouthamel</b> , <i>Sr. Director of Rules &amp; Competition</i>	253-214-2924   <a href="mailto:scrouthamel@wagolf.org">scrouthamel@wagolf.org</a>
<b>Adam Gracik</b> , <i>Asst. Director of Rules &amp; Competition</i>	253-214-2926   <a href="mailto:agracik@wagolf.org">agracik@wagolf.org</a>
<b>Mark Wilhite</b> , <i>Championship Operations Assistant</i>	206-376-9707 (c)   <a href="mailto:mwilhite@wagolf.org">mwilhite@wagolf.org</a>

### COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

<b>Tom Cade</b> , <i>Sr. Director of Communications &amp; Marketing</i>	253-214-2918   <a href="mailto:tcade@wagolf.org">tcade@wagolf.org</a>
<b>Marilyn Esguerra</b> , <i>Director of Marketing</i>	253-214-2916   <a href="mailto:mesguerra@wagolf.org">mesguerra@wagolf.org</a>
<b>Vincent Fiorino</b> , <i>Manager of Communications &amp; Marketing</i>	253-214-2922   <a href="mailto:vfiorino@wagolf.org">vfiorino@wagolf.org</a>
<b>Audrey Orem</b> , <i>Coordinator of Communications &amp; Marketing</i>	253-214-2911   <a href="mailto:aorem@wagolf.org">aorem@wagolf.org</a>
<b>Jeff Job</b> , <i>Director of Sales</i>	206-915-1134 (c)   <a href="mailto:jjjob@wagolf.org">jjjob@wagolf.org</a>
<b>Jay Brandt</b> , <i>Account Executive</i>	541-410-9076 (c)   <a href="mailto:jbrandt@wagolf.org">jbrandt@wagolf.org</a>

### HANDICAPPING/IT/GHIN/COURSE RATING

<b>Nate Schroeder</b> , <i>Director of Handicapping and Course Rating</i>	253-214-2923   <a href="mailto:nschroeder@wagolf.org">nschroeder@wagolf.org</a>
<b>Collin Westwood</b> , <i>Manager of Handicapping &amp; GHIN Services</i>	253-214-2915   <a href="mailto:cwestwood@wagolf.org">cwestwood@wagolf.org</a>

### MEMBERSHIP

<b>Shari Jacobson</b> , <i>Director of Membership &amp; Club Relations</i>	253-214-2925   <a href="mailto:sjacobson@wagolf.org">sjacobson@wagolf.org</a>
<b>Torrin Westwood</b> , <i>Manager of Membership &amp; Club Relations</i>	253-214-2919   <a href="mailto:twestwood@wagolf.org">twestwood@wagolf.org</a>

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## WA Golf Membership:

Q: How do I become a WA Golf member?

A: WA Golf does not offer individual memberships. In order to become a member of WA Golf an individual must either join a WA Golf Member Club or form a club of their own. A club must have at least 10 members, a set of By-Laws, Committees, Officers, etc. There are three types of clubs:

1. Type 1 - A club located at a golf course with a Course Rating and Slope Rating.
2. Type 2 - A group of ten or more interested members (friends, family, co-workers, etc.) who play golf together regularly, have an established set of by-laws, and proper committees to ensure compliance with the World Handicap System.
3. Type 3 - A group of ten or more members where the members had no prior affiliation and a majority of the recruiting and sign up of the membership is done by solicitation to the public (e.g. newspaper, Internet).

Please visit a golf course near you or go to our website, [www.wagolf.org](http://www.wagolf.org), and click on the “Join or Renew” button to join online.

Q: I belong to a group of golfers that gets together weekly and plays different courses around the area. We would like to issue Handicap Indexes. How do we go about this?

A: As stated above, you would be referred to as a Type 2 club. Please contact the Membership Department at the WA Golf office, (800) 643-6410, and ask for information regarding forming a club so your group can be officially recognized.

Q: What is a multi-member?

A: A multi-member is a golfer who has membership at more than one club, whether private, semi-private, public or associate. A golfer may be a member at more than one club in WA Golf, or may be a member at more than one golf association. Either way, that golfer must carry just one GHIN number (unless the second association uses a different handicap vendor than GHIN, then they would have a separate number relational to that vendor as well). If the multiple clubs each use GHIN, all scores will be contained in that one record on GHIN, no matter where that golfer plays. If the multiple clubs use different handicap vendors, all scores must be recorded with each handicap vendor. A WA Golf multi-member must pay dues at each club to which they belong.

## Handicap Index:

Q: Why should I have a handicap?

A: It's the way players of varying abilities can compete with one another on equal basis, whether you are involved in serious competition or casual play. Golf is one of the few sports that allows such an opportunity.

Q: Can I calculate my own handicap, using software on my home or office computer?

A: No, you cannot calculate an official Handicap Index on your own. To have an Handicap Index, the USGA requires that you belong to a golf club, and that the golf club is authorized by a local golf association or from the USGA directly and utilizes the USGA's Central Computation Service to calculate the Handicap Indexes. Within the confines of a golf club, a process is at work called "peer review", by which the club polices its own members' scores.

Q: Why does my Handicap Index rarely seem to reflect how I play?

A: A Handicap Index is based on your potential ability, not your scoring average. You will probably only play to your Handicap Index about 20-25% of the time, or one out of every four or five rounds. It is when an individual is regularly "playing to their handicap" that the handicap committee should investigate that golfer's score posting habits, because something clearly is amiss. In a competition, as well as in a casual game, it becomes very important to know the very best that players can be.

Q: What does it mean when my Handicap Index is "Capped"?

A: When a player's Handicap Index is more than 3 strokes higher than their Low Handicap Index a Soft Cap is applied to their Handicap Index. The Soft Cap restricts all further upward movement by 50%. For example, if a player's Handicap Index is 13 and their Low Handicap Index is 10 they would be under the soft cap. If this player posts a score that would cause their Handicap Index to rise by one stroke for their next revision it would instead rise by half a stroke because of the 50% reduction in upward movement caused by the Soft Cap. If a player's handicap index is more than 5 strokes above their Low Handicap Index after the Soft Cap has been applied then the Hard Cap will be triggered, restricting the player's Handicap Index from moving more than 5 strokes above their Low Index. Player's who have a Soft Cap or Hard Cap applied will have a red information icon display next to their Handicap Index on all GHIN products.

Q: If my Handicap Index has been capped, when can I expect it to revert back to "normal"?

A: The Soft Cap and Hard Cap procedure, as well as the Low Handicap Index, is recalculated with each revision, which is triggered when a player posts a score. Caps will be removed when a player's Handicap Index, prior to having the caps applied, is 3 strokes or less above their Low Handicap Index. This can happen by the player's Handicap Index going down or by their Low Handicap Index going up. The Low Handicap Index is the lowest Handicap Index a player has achieved in the 365 days prior to their most recent revision. The Handicap Committee at each club also has the authority to modify a player's Low Handicap Index if they feel the cap is not warranted.

Q: Why do I have a Handicap Index and a Course Handicap?

A: A Handicap Index represents the potential playing ability on a course of standard playing difficulty (A Slope Rating of 113 is standard, and this number is built into the Handicap Index formula). A Course Handicap represents a whole number of strokes needed on a specific set of tees to play to that tee's Par. You need a Handicap Index in order to convert to a Course Handicap; you never actually play with your Index. A Course Handicap conversion takes into account the Slope Rating of the set of tees you're playing, without it, you may be giving up strokes! So, take your Handicap Index, go to a Course Handicap Chart for the pertinent set of tees posted at the course, and find your whole number Course Handicap.

## Maximum Hole Score:

Q. What is the purpose of Maximum Hole Score and how is it to be used?

A. The purpose of Maximum Hole Score, also known as Net Double Bogey, is to downwardly adjust an individual hole score to make handicaps more representative of a player's potential scoring ability. Using Net double Bogey sets a maximum number of strokes that a golfer can post on any hole depending on the golfer's Course Handicap. Think of it this way: We all have outlier (Bad) holes in a given round, this removes those from the equation when calculating your Handicap Index. First, start with your Handicap Index. Next, go to the Course Handicap Chart of the set of tees that you are playing that day. Go down the chart to find your current Handicap Index, and read across to discover your whole number Course Handicap. Take that Course Handicap and look at handicap stroke allocation published on the course scorecard to determine which holes you receive handicap strokes on. During your round, the maximum score you can take on a hole for handicapping purposes is Par plus two strokes and any handicap strokes you receive on the hole. Remember that Net Double Bogey is for handicapping purposes only. You must apply Net Double Bogey before posting any score (even Competition scores!).

Q. How is Maximum Hole Score used if a golfer does not have enough scores to have a Handicap Index and Course Handicap?

A. A beginning golfer will use par plus five strokes for every hole. This will apply until they have a Handicap Index. It is also noteworthy that Maximum Hole Score does not tell you when to stop play on a hole! It is only used for the purpose of keeping an exceptionally bad hole from changing your Handicap Index too much. There is also no limit to how many holes you can apply Net Double Bogey to.

## Score Posting:

Q. Since the Handicap System formula only takes 8 out of 20 of my best scores, should I bother to post scores when I play badly?

A. YES! The accuracy of handicapping relies on full reporting of all eligible scores. A score history is continual (but only considers the current twenty rounds) and is intended to reflect the profile of the player from year to year. The Handicap System will adjust a player's Handicap Index up or down as their game changes. You may play completely differently as you age, as you travel, or whether you are playing a brand new course without benefit of local knowledge. Perhaps you improve after taking lessons, for example, or find you concentrate better getting ready for an event (or during the event) and shoot lower scores. The System allows for this fluctuation, but only when the golfer acts responsibly in returning all acceptable scores.

Q. What is the preferred method of score posting?

A. Under the World Handicap System, it is strongly encouraged that players post their scores on a hole-by-hole basis. This can be done quickly and easily on the WA Golf website, a score posting kiosk, [www.ghin.com](http://www.ghin.com) or on the GHIN Mobile App. Hole-by-hole score posting provides accuracy and ensures that Maximum Hole Score is applied correctly. Players can also post their Adjusted Gross Scores as a 18-hole Total or Front 9 and Back 9 totals.

Q: How often are scores and Handicap Indexes updated on [ghin.com](http://ghin.com)?

A: Scores are displayed in real time on [www.ghin.com](http://www.ghin.com); in other words, once a score reaches the GHIN server, it is also shown on [ghin.com](http://ghin.com). Handicap Indexes are at midnight daily.

Q: Whom do I contact to correct an erroneous score that has been posted to my GHIN record?

A: Please make a request directly to your club Handicap Chairperson so that they may take the necessary steps to remove the score. Only they can perform maintenance on your scoring record. It is the policy of WA Golf that we will not change anything in a player's scoring record except for the date of the round.

Q: Are scores made in Four-Ball and match play rounds to be posted to my handicap?

A: Yes, all rounds which meet the definition of "Acceptable Scores", as defined in the World Handicap System, are to be posted. For holes played and completed, record the actual score. A player who starts, but does not complete a hole or is conceded a stroke must record the most likely score for handicap purposes. A "Most likely" score includes the number of strokes already taken plus, in the estimation of the player, the number of strokes that it would take to complete the hole from that place more than half the time. If you end the match because one competitor has already won, record Net Par on the remaining holes. You must play at least 14 holes in order for the score to be posted as an 18-hole round and at least 7 holes to post a nine-hole score. The Most Likely Score may not exceed the player's Maximum Hole Score.

Q. Can I play a "practice" round and not post my score?

A. While there may be rare circumstances when a player truly practices on the course in advance of a competition and does not have a postable score, a player cannot simply declare a round as a "practice" round in order to not post their score. Likewise, taking a "mulligan" or playing a second ball after a bad shot does not make a player's score ineligible for score posting. In these circumstances where a hole is not played under the Rules of Golf, the player can adjust their individual hole score to Net Double Bogey to post an acceptable score. If the Handicap Committee determines that the player is using the Net Double Bogey adjustment to gain an unfair scoring advantage they must take action under Rule 7, which includes adjusting the player's Handicap Index, posting a penalty score to the player's scoring record or potentially withdrawing a player's handicap under extreme circumstances.

Q: What about posting nine-hole scores if I am carrying an 18-hole handicap?

A: The GHIN Handicap Program software allows you to post nine-hole scores. Individual nine-hole scores must be posted, by the same procedure used to post eighteen-hole scores, with the corresponding nine-hole Course Rating, Slope Rating, and par. The software will combine nine-hole scores with other nine-hole scores as they are posted onto the GHIN server. Scores that are the product of combination will be reflected in your score history by the letter "N". At least 7 holes must be played in order to post a nine-hole score.

Q. I was playing at a course recently and I noticed that the set of tees I chose didn't have a Course Rating or Slope Rating, but the other tees did. How do I post that score?

A. As long as there is another rated set of tees within 300 yards of total length from the set of you played, a rating can be calculated. Appendix G in the Rules of Handicapping provides the correct adjustments to the Course Rating and Slope Rating for an unrated set of tees based on the difference in overall yardage. Let's say that you are a woman playing from the middle tees, which does not have a Course and Slope Rating. The Course Rating from the forward tees is 71.6 with a Slope Rating of 119. You notice that the middle tees are 145 yards longer than the forward tees. Using the chart in Appendix G (Page 105) of the Rules of Handicapping, you will post your score with a Course Rating of 72.4 (71.6 + 0.8 adjustment) and a Slope Rating of 121 (119 + 2 adjustment). The adjustment in the Course and Slope Rating only serves as a temporary adjustment so you can post your score; it is not a formal Course and Slope Rating. For a permanent rating for these tees, club officers would need to contact WA Golf.

Q. How do I post a score made on a foreign golf course for handicap posting purposes?

A. With the release of the World Handicap System in 2020, all major governing bodies of golf around the world have adopted the Course Rating System, as the Course and Slope Ratings produced by the system are the foundation of calculating a Handicap Index. Now when you travel and play internationally, you can transport your Handicap Index to courses all over the world and will find published Course and Slope Ratings so you can post your score. Occasionally, you may find a course that does not have a Course and Slope Rating issued, in which case you will not be able to post a score. The Rules of Handicapping states that a course must have a Course Rating and Slope Rating in order for rounds played on it to be allowable for handicap purposes. The USGA has a public Course Rating and Slope Database which can be used to find the issued Course and Slope Ratings at any course around the world: [www.ncrdb.usga.org](http://www.ncrdb.usga.org).

### **Preferred Lies:**

Q: When should “Preferred Lies” (Winter Rules) be used?

A: Preferred Lies/Winter Rules conflicts with the fundamental principle of playing the ball as it lies. However, it is our recommendation that if poor course conditions are pervasive and the club’s Handicap Committee has determined that adopting a local “preferred lies” rule would “promote fair play or help protect the course”, the correct Preferred Lie rule should be in a detailed written form. A sign simply stating “Winter Rules Today” will not suffice! It is important to note that Preferred Lies, if used during the regular season, tends generally to lower scores and Handicap Indexes, thus penalizing players in competition with players whose scores are made without preferred lies. WA Golf believes that preferred lies is often overused and misunderstood. Remember that using preferred lies in a round does not negate the score for handicap purposes! Please contact WA Golf for more information about proper use of Preferred Lies.

### **Course Rating:**

Q: Is there an easy explanation for Course Rating and Slope Rating?

A: Although there are many factors involved in the Course Rating System, here’s a relatively simple interpretation.

**COURSE RATING:** This is an indication of the playing difficulty of a course for scratch golfers under normal course and weather conditions, based on yardage and other obstacles. It is denoted as strokes taken to one decimal place.

**BOGEY RATING:** This is an indication of the playing difficulty of a course for bogey golfers under normal course and weather conditions, based on yardage and other obstacles. It is denoted as strokes taken to one decimal place. A bogey golfer is approximately a 20.0 handicap for men and 24.0 for women.

**SLOPE RATING:** This is an indication of the relative difficulty of a course for golfers above a scratch handicap. The Slope Rating is derived from the difference between the Course Rating and Bogey Rating on a set of tees. The higher the Slope Rating, the more difficult the tees are for high handicap golfers in proportion to low handicap golfers.

That’s it! Slope doesn’t tell you how the course proportionately plays from any other set of tees, let alone tell you how it compares with other courses. It is dangerous to try and draw any sort of meaningful conclusions by comparing Slope Ratings from one course to another.

## **Stroke Allocation (Application of Stroke Holes):**

Q: If I have a Course Handicap greater than 18, where do I get my 19th stroke?

A: Each hole is assigned an allocated handicap stroke number, 1 through 18. One stroke is assigned per hole for 18 strokes, so you would get your 19th stroke starting again on the number one handicapped hole.

Q: How are strokes given for two golfers playing in a match from different sets of tees, or for a man and a woman playing from the same set of tees?

A: Most often under the World Handicap System a simple conversion of a Handicap Index to a Course Handicap is all that is necessary. As Course Handicap is a reflection of the number of strokes a player needs to play to Par of the set of tees they are playing, as long as Par is the same between the two sets or the same for both men and women playing the same set, no additional adjustments are needed. If there is a difference in Par, then the player competing from the tees with a higher Par will get the difference in Par added to their Course Handicap.

## CONTACT WA GOLF

wagolf.org | 206.526.1238

**Nate Schroeder** | [nschroeder@wagolf.org](mailto:nschroeder@wagolf.org)

Director of Handicapping & Course Rating

**Collin Westwood** | [cwestwood@wagolf.org](mailto:cwestwood@wagolf.org)

Manager, Handicapping and GHIN Services



Golf for Everyone | [wagolf.org](http://wagolf.org)

